

23 April 1980

Mr. Leonard R. Sussman
Executive Director
Freedom House
20 West 40th Street
New York, New York 10018

Dear Mr. Sussman:

Admiral Turner has asked me to thank you for your letter of April 18th.

When we announced our current policy concerning CIA relationships with U.S. news media representatives (copy of news release and regulations enclosed) on 2 December 1977, it received wide media coverage. Subsequently, the Subcommittee on Oversight of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, House of Representatives, held open hearings on this subject in December 1977 and April 1978. The transcript of the hearings was released by the Subcommittee. As you know the issue was discussed again at the ASNE convention in Washington just recently. Our position has been stated repeatedly since December 1977 and has been upheld by our oversight committees in Congress and by the President.

The U.S. media is probably doing more harm to itself by spotlighting the matter than the possibility of cooperation with the Central Intelligence Agency could ever inflict.

Sincerely,

SECRET

Herbert E. Hetu
Director of Public Affairs

Enc.

D/PA/HEH/kgf/23 April 1980/7676

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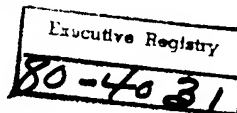
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April 18, 1980

The Honorable Stansfield Turner
 Director
 Central Intelligence Agency
 Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Admiral Turner:

I was speaking in Senegal at a colloquium for African journalists when you told the American Society of Newspaper Editors that the CIA may still enlist journalists for clandestine activities. As an indication of the Third World's sensitivity to such missions, an African editor sharply asked the Yugoslav news agency spokesman whether Tanjug is government-controlled. The reply was equivocating. Later, an American journalist was asked whether he was a mouthpiece for "the White House"! He, of course, denied it, and was believed more widely than the man from Tanjug. It was also generally believed that there was a 50-50 chance that the TASS man present was a KGB agent and not a journalist at all.

After your statement every American journalist overseas could too easily be associated with the man from TASS---perceived not even as favorably as the governmental journalist from Yugoslavia. For who is to know which of the three CIA missions for journalists that you had approved may involve the particular American journalist on the local scene?

American journalism is already under great challenge around the world. I have spent considerable time and energy for five years to help build greater credibility for U.S. news media. Attacks come not only from the Soviet bloc but from many developing countries of diverse political orientations. American media are charged not only with technological domination of the flow of information, but with imposing ideas and biases as well. American journalism is believed by some to be guided by the U.S. political establishment. We who represent this country in international forums patiently explain how an independent, government-free journalism operates.

Our efforts are harshly undermined, however, by official word that some ---it matters not how few or how many---U.S. journalists do indeed perform CIA functions.

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The Honorable Stansfield Turner

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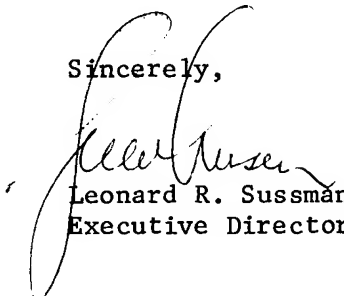
Freedom House fully understands the needs of the CIA. The enclosed series of articles---published years ago---indicates our balanced view of the role of intelligence agencies in a free society.

Yet that is not to suggest that every conceivable operation should be permitted. Dressing intelligence agents in journalists' garb, or enlisting bona fide journalists for intelligence missions is bound to undermine American journalism. That is certainly not in the best interest of our society or even of our intelligence service.

I hope you will shortly state publicly that you have directed no American journalists hereafter be enlisted anywhere for intelligence missions.

jm

Sincerely,



Leonard R. Sussman
Executive Director